

## ANTELOPE VALLEY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT EXPLAINER



In 2013, new legislation aimed at improving achievement among high-needs students shifted the way in which school funding is allocated. Under this new law, schools receive more funding to provide critical supports and opportunities for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth in an effort to address the inequities that have long left these students behind.

The Local Control Accountability Plan—or LCAP—is the mechanism through which schools tell their superintendent and the state how they are using these funds to improve services and programs that will help high-needs students achieve. But the Antelope Valley Union High School District has consistently violated the legal requirements governing LCAPs, and has failed to account for millions of dollars earmarked for high-needs students. In the 2019–2020 school year alone, more than \$6.9 million intended for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth—the vast majority of whom are Black and Latinx—was left unused or was used for improper purposes, with minimal reporting and seemingly no oversight.

For instance, the district allocated \$1.7 million in funds intended for low-income students, English learners, and foster youth to pay for a contract with the L.A. County Sheriff’s Department, but failed to describe how increased enforcement will serve these students. In fact, decades of research have shown that the presence of law enforcement on school campuses disproportionately harms the high needs students of color who are supposed to benefit from these funds. These expenditures—along with millions that were entirely unaccounted for—have come at the cost of proven strategies that can close achievement gaps for high-needs students.

Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County and Equal Justice Society have filed an administrative complaint with the district superintendent detailing the district’s failure to comply with legal requirements governing school spending plans and demanding the district investigate budget discrepancies, adhere to state-mandated reporting requirements, and require each school to clearly demonstrate how these special funds are used to serve the high-needs students for whom they were allocated. NLSLA is representing AVUHSD parent Diana Padilla, and Equal Justice Society is representing Cancel the Contract-Antelope Valley, a project of Reform LA Jails fighting for justice for students of color in the AV.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COMPLAINT

- The district’s 2019–2020 LCAP has a total shortfall of \$3.6 million budgeted for high-needs students. This sizeable carry-over is not accounted for in the 2021–2022 LCAP, and there is no further explanation explaining the shortfall or detailing what the school has done or plans to do with the money.
- The district does not articulate any goals for high-needs students, students with disabilities, Black or Latinx students, or homeless youth, as is required by law.
- The district’s LCAP does not describe how funds allocated to high-needs students are directed towards and effective at meeting their needs, as is required by law. Some of these more questionable expenditures include a \$1.7 million contact with the Sheriff’s Department, \$27,850 spent on enrolling in a LinkedIn account, and \$847,176 on a Community Attendance Worker.
- The district’s lack of transparency has effectively prevented parents, students, and other stakeholders from meaningfully participating in the LCAP approval process, as is required by law.

**JOIN US: [CanceltheContract.com](https://cancelthecontract.com)**

